made by me, it was made much earlier than the sad assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Therefore, they are there all the time, but they are visible. They carry their badges and they wear their uniform, a sort of safari suit, those who are seen near me. But, so far as any intelligence collection, anything about Members is concerned, if somebody is doing it, it is unauthorised; if somebody is doing it, it is unlawful; if somebody is doing it, he must be punished. Therefore, I am authorising you, Madam, and, through you, the Speaker as well, to kindly look into this. And if you come to the conclusion that something is missing somewhere, I am at your disposal.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Violation of EPF Act

*121. SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been any allegations of violation of the provisions of the Employees' Provident Fund Act or rules made there-under against publishers of the English newspaper "The Hindu" published from Chennai;

(b) if so, what action is being taken in the matter; and

(c) if no action is being taken, the reasons therefore?

THE MINSITER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) No written complaint on violation of Employees Provident Fund & Misc. Provisions Acts and the schemes framed thereunder have been received by the Employees Provident Fund Organisation against the Publishers of English newspaper "The Hindu". Area Enforcement Officer inspected the establishment of M/Kasturi & Sons Pvt. Ltd. on 11.7.97 and found that no irregularities have been committed either by way of remittence of PF contribution or by way of submission of returns by the establishment under the provisions of Employees Provident Fund and Misc. provisions Act.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, my first supplementary is whether the Government of India is aware of the allegation made by hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Naduin his own official organ of his party, a newspaper of 50 years' standing, *"Murasoli"*, to the effect that if *"The Hindu"* publishes something, is it imperative I should conduct an inquiry even *"The Hindu"* newspaper organisation itself has committed a fraud in provident fund. That has to be inquired into Workers have been cheated. These are very serious allegations made by a very responsible Cheif Minister and it has been denied by him. It is written in his own official organ. Is the Government of India aware of this allegation? If it is aware of this allegation of the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, then whether that has been taken into account while conducting the inspection on 11.7.97? That is my first supplementary.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: We have received no writtne complaint from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Since there was a report in one of the newspapers, *"Dinamani,"* about...

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Sir, not only *"Dinamani"* but also *"Murasoli."*

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: What is the date?

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: It was *"Murasoli"* dated 29th. *"Murasoli"* is the official organ of the ruling party founded by the Chief Minister, very ably edited by the hon. Minister of Industries. His name *"Murasoli"* is a synonym of this newspaper. It was on page 6 of *"Murasoli"* dated 29th. It has not been contradicted even today.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: 28th June!

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: 29th June, page 6 of *"Murasoli"*.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: 28th June was the date when the report appeared in *'Dinamani.'*

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: 28th June, is the date when it appeared in *"Murasoli"* also.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: A regular inspection was conducted by the officers of the Chennai Regional Provident Fund office on 11.7.97, about 21 days back. According to the report, there is no irregularity committed. There are 2882 employees, all of them are paid provident fund and other statutory dues. No employee, when they went for inspection even on 11.7.97, made a complaint that there is any non-payment of statutory dues. Not only that; the joint secretary *"The Hindu"* National Press Employees Union has also reported that there are no grievances regarding implementation of provident fund benefits to its employees. The regular inspection and also the inspection conducted on 11.7.97 have said that all statutory obligations are met by *"The Hindu."* Another thing is that the auditors' report which is published every year states. "All statutory obligations are met, as far as the Provident Fund Department is concerned, we have performed our inspections and we have absolutely no grievance against *"The Hindu"* no irregularity is committed by *"The Hindu"*. This is the latest inspection.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, my second supplementary arises from the answer of the hon. Minister. We have come to know that the Government of India was fully aware of the serious allegation made by the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in his own offical organ.

The routine inspection was conducted on 11.7.1997. We are now happy to learn from the hon. Labour Minister that there have bveen no defaults either in payment or even in submission of necessary periodical returns. My question is: Would the Government of India find out from the Chief Minister as to what the allegations are? Because, he has talked about fraud and workers being cheated. If there are any allegations, would you take action?

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: As we have found out from regular inspections, there is no irregularity committee by this organisation. *(Interruption)* I do not know why we should write to anybody to tell us whether there are any irregularities when we have not found any.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: It is not an ordinary person. It is the Chief Minister of a State! Probably, he knows much more than your routine inspection officials.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: I do not deny. *(Interruption)*

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: He made a public statement.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: What I say is, if the Chief Minister wants any such information which he could not find, he can write to us. We have conducted an inspection after "Dinamani" report came.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: Why should you not find out what is what?

SHRI JIBON ROY: Madam, my understanding is that the Labour Ministry and the Provident Fund authorities are the greatest violators of the EPF Act. According to a recent census, arond 12 crore industrial workers and farm workers are to be covered under the EPF Act but till now the membership is only 1,80,00,000. The growth rate is less than the growth rate of employment. Secondly, Mdam, most of the workers are not getting accounting slips. In most of the States the arrears are five years old! I wish to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps the Government is taking to widen the coverage of EPF so that more and more workers are covered

and what steps the Government is taking to give accounting slips regularly, every month.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Madam, the question here relates to "The Hindu" and I have replied to that. There may be loopholes and I will check it. We are trying to make enquiries wherever complaints are received, and wherever there are deficiencies, we plug the deficiencies to see to it that the infrastructure functions all right. If the hon. Member has any particular instance, he can bring it to my notice and I will definitely look into it.

SHRI JIBON ROY: It is a genuine enquiry. Accounting slips are not issued for five years. For five years workers are not getting accounting slips in most of the States, Madam. Secondly, the coverage is 1.8 crores as against 12 crores. This is the greatest violation, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister said that you are giving a geneal information and he would make an enquiry. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JIBON ROY: Let him say that the accounting slips are given every month. I have visited the entrie country as part of a Standing Committee. I have seen a general default for five years. General defaults are there for everybody almost.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: General default with a particular company? *(Interruptions)* Now I cannot answer a general question like that. You just tell me particularly and I will give you an answer for that. I cannot give a general answer.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He said he will make an enquiry.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Madam, on several issues the present Tamil Nadu Government issues incorrect and false statements and information, mostly irresponsible statements against the AIADMK Government. What action does the Central Government propose to take against persons who give such irresponsible statements? I can quote an example. It was said that thousands of crores of rupees had been said to be with the former Chief Minister, disproportionate to her income. Now a chargesheet has been filed only in respect of Rs. 4.5 crores, as disproportionate account. Such kind of irresponsible statements are issued by the Chief Minsiter and other persons. Would the Central Government take any action?

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: But he is the Labour Minister... *(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You took a lot of labour in framing your question. But, unfortunately, your aim is missed because this question is related to a particular issue. ... *(Interruptions)*... you cannot put a question which is ... *(Interruptions)*... This question does not arise. ... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: It has been reported that officials of the Labour Department visited *"The Hindu"* office on the instruction of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. I would like to know whether it is a fact or not.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: On my instruction to the Central Provident Fund Commissioner, an inspection was conducted on 11.7.97. They went there to do the inspection. There is nothing wrong in it.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Madam, chairty begins at home. As far as this question is concerned, I am afraid, the Labour Minsitry of the Government of India has no moral or ethical right to reply to this question because they are the biggest defaulter with regard to PF dues to be paid to the retired employees of the CPSUs concerned. Madam, this issue has been raised time and again on the floor of this House. The latest thing today is that we have also given a memorandum to the hon. Prime Minister. I have got papers from different public sector undertakings where the President is the owner in which PF dues are to be

paid for the last five years. There are 2,300 employees of one public sector undertaking who have not got their PF dues and gratuity. Now, under these circumstances, what do these inspections mean? I would like to know whether the hon. Prime Minister will give an assurance that as an ideal promoter the Government of India will ensure that at least the PF dues and post-retirement statutory dues will be paid to the CPSU workers. ...*(Interruptions)*...Can he give this assurance as an ideal promoter? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Madam, ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Madam, it is not in his hands. ...*(Interruptions)*...He is helpless. ...*(Interruptions)*...

The Ministry of Finance says that it is not under any obligation to pay these dues...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Madam, I have got the answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...He is helpless.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him admit that he is helpless. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let him explain as to why he is helpless ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: If the hon. Member says that I am helpless, should I deny it? ...*(Interruptions)*... Does he want me to give a helpless answer? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have my protection to deny it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Let him give an assurance. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: If there is a specific question with regard to any public sector undertaking, he should tell me and I will come with an answer. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, this is not an answer. ...*(Interruptions)*... You may not answer specifically, but, at least you can give an assurance. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Madam, the point is that the Labour Ministry cannot do it. These are arrears which are to come from these undertakings. For example, in the case of statutory dues, we can go in for prosecution. Now, the question is whether the Labour Department can prosecute a public sector undertaking. So, it is a question of a policy decision. That is why I have said. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATUREVDI: Under the law, nothing prevents you. ...*(Interruptions)*...

उपसभापति: उनको बोलने दीजिए। आप लोग मंत्री जी को जवाब नहीं देने देते हैं।

श्री रामदास अग्रवाल: बेसिकली गलत है।

श्री त्रिलोकी नाथ चतुर्वेदी: उन्होंने तो कह दिया कि नहीं कर सकते हैं. ...(व्यवधान)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer. Maybe, he is going to answer that. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Surely, I am not advocating that the public sector undertaking chiefs should be arrested for the violation of the proivdent fund laws. But, his Ministry can take it up with the Ministry of Finance and seek the intervention of the Prime Minister. As my collegue has rightly pointed out, provision for dues is the first charge on any expenditure and if the public sector enterprises are defaulters in this regard, the Government loses its moral authority to implement this law in respect of the private sector. Therefore, can you assure this House that you will take up this matter with all seriousesness with the Ministry of Finance and provide at least this part of budgetary support to meet the requirement of the provident fund

and if he fails to persuade the Ministry of Finance, can he seek the intervention of the Prime Minister? This is the only assurance that we want from him.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: I will bring it to the notice of the hon. Prime Minister.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What will you bring? The Prime Minister is already listening to it himself.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I know this issue also came up before the Consultative Committee meeting. This issue is receiving my attention.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: After an assurance, do we need further clarification?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Madam, this is pertaining to *"The Hindu"* newspaper. *"The Hindu"* Newspaper is one of the major newspapers with a standing and reputation. Here the question of provocation was the intolerance of the State Government and the Chief Minister because of publication of a report. The basic thrust of the question is, intolerance of the State Government and the Chief Minister and use of muscle power and Government machinery to suffocate the newspaper - media. The hon. Minister answered that their officers visited and examined all the documents. You said that your Provident Fund Commission office records regularly all the payments without any default. In spite of having all the records in your office, why have you sent your officers to the office of *"The Hindu"* newspaper, which is having high reputation? My question is, is it not a kind of humiliation, is it not a kind of using Government machinery to humiliate a newspaper, even though the records are available in your office?

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Madam, inspections are conducted regularly. Conducting an inspection is not going to cast any aspersions. Secondly, I do not want to make any comment on the Chief Minister's report. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Madam, it is quite irresponsible ...(*Interruptions*)... Is it not irresponsible? ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: I do not want to comment on that ...(*Interruptions*)... What I can only say is, ...(*Interruptions*)... as far as the Labour Ministry and the Provident Commission Department are concerned , we have found out, through our inspection, that *"The Hindu"* has not committed any irregularity.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: You have all the records in your office. What made you to go there?

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: We always update our records. You know very well that the records we have are three-month old; they are not updated records.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: I know everything.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: After the Prime Minister's assurance, I will move on to Question Number 122.

दिल्ली सरकार द्वारा दिल्ली की नियमित कालोनियों हेतु मांगी गई राशि

*122. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह:** क्या शहरी कार्य और रोजगार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र, दिल्ली की सरकार ने कार्यभार ग्रहण करने के पश्चात् दिल्ली की अनेक अनधिकृत कालोनियों को नियमित कर दिया है और इन कालोनियों में विद्युत, पेयजल, सीवर लाइन, सड़कें इत्यादि जैसी मूल सुविधाएं प्रदान करने के प्रयोजन से वित्तीय सहायता उपलब्ध कराए जाने के लिए केन्द्रीय सरकार के पास एक प्रस्ताव भेजा है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उक्त प्रस्ताव में कितनी कालोनियों को शामिल किया गया है तथा इनके नाम क्या है;

(ग) उक्त प्रस्ताव के अनुसार कितनी राशि दी गई है अथवा दिए जाने का विचार है;

(घ) इस संबंध में विलंब के क्या कारण हैं; और

(ङ) इन कालोनियों में उक्त मूल सुविधाएं कब तक प्रदान किए जाने की संभावना है?